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ABSTRACT

This book tells the story of one year in the life of Jefferson Elementary School (pseudonym for a real school), which was selected to participate in the state's "School for the Twenty-first Century" program. The faculty and principal proposed to build a developmental community school based on the following components: whole language, cooperative learning, multicultural education, an integrated curriculum, multiage grouping, technology, and mainstreaming of special-needs children. The book describes how several major reforms (including multiage classes and school-based management) converged with other issues (including the principal's decision not to extend the contract of a new teacher and a failed effort to move the school to another location). The book portrays the issues that arose during the change process, how those issues became connected, and how personalities and special interests of staff and parents both facilitated and derailed reforms. The first three chapters describe events of the 1990-91 school year. Chapter 4 offers an analysis of the factors that shaped and supported the school year. Chapter 5 argues that school reform is essentially a practical challenge, and that effecting a program of major social change will almost inevitably run headfirst into conflicting views and interests. The foreword was written by Patricia A. Wasley and the afterword by Deborah Meier. An index is included. (Contains 20 references.) (LMI)

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